

MINUTES FINAL - as of 1/12/09
Governor's State Trails Council Meeting
Friday, October 17, 2008
Kettle Moraine State Forest – Northern Unit
Greenbush Recreation Shelter
10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

State Trails Council Members Present: Ken Carpenter, Randy Harden, Jim Joque, Dave Phillips, Mike McFadzen, Tom Thornton, Robbie Webber, John Nordbo (delegate for Tom Huber)

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Present: Dan Schuller, Jerry Leiterman, Brigit Brown, Andy Janicki, Joseph Warren

Others Present: Will Christianson, Doug Johnson, Ken Linzmeyer, Valerie McGuire, Dave Peterson, Judy Peterson, Kathleen Rammer, Pat Thornton

Agenda review/repair and approval of July meeting minutes

- Phillips called the meeting to order. Amendment to the agenda: Terry Larson was not able to attend the meeting to discuss wider/safer machines for the physically challenged.
- Approval of the July 11, 2008 meeting minutes. Moved by McFadzen. Webber seconded. Minutes approved.

Chair Report

- The Non-motorized Trails Legislative Study Committee has held two meetings. Senator Jim Sullivan is the Chair, and Representative Jim Ott is Vice-Chair of the bipartisan committee. A goal of the committee is to look at different funding possibilities for non-motorized trails. The committee is looking at a number of funding sources and options. Some of the other ideas the legislative study committee is working on may tie together with the work of the STC Ad Hoc Committee. One of the ideas is to create a non-motorized council, similar to the existing ATV and Snowmobile councils, to deal with specific non-motorized issues. The legislative committee will be meeting again on December 5. Phillips will send information out as it becomes available. Additional information about the committee is also available on the Wisconsin Legislature website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/committees/study/2008/REC/index.htm>.
- There is one vacancy on the STC, most recently held by Martha Schouweiler representing Water Trails. The council is waiting to hear from the Governor's Office when the position may be filled.
- McFadzen updated the council concerning the Stewardship Advisory Committee. The Legislature approved the Stewardship Program for 2010-2019 for \$86 million per year. The charge of the Advisory Committee is to advise the DNR on different groups' access to properties purchased with Stewardship money. The committee will be looking at the definition of "nature-based activity" as it is defined in existing administrative code.

Currently, the five activities in code that are considered “nature based” by law are hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking and cross-country skiing. One of the issues the committee is working on is the issue of hunting access. As hunting seasons and areas expand, there may be conflicts with popular times and places for outdoor recreation. Schuller stated that activities are allowed on a property if approved in a master plan. Parks by statute do not allow hunting unless open by administrative rule. Most other public lands are open for hunting unless posted as closed. Phillips asked if the STC should provide any input or resolution to the committee. Schuller suggested the STC may want to wait until any recommendations the committee proposes are in a draft form. The STC could then comment on the draft or pass a resolution and have comments go directly to the Natural Resources Board. The Stewardship Advisory Committee will be meeting again in December before the next STC meeting. The STC will discuss the issue at the January meeting.

State Trails Council Member Reports

- *Off-Highway Vehicles.* There are still some issues with the Black River State Forest Master Plan that WATVA is working on with the DNR. The National Forest Service Travel Management Plan proposal could reduce travel in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest for ATVs, off-highway vehicles and other uses. Some trails, routes and connections may be closed if they are not listed on the official forest transportation map which will be published in 2009. The Forest Service is taking comments about the Travel Management Plan.
- *Snowmobiling.* Last year was a very good season for snowmobiling and there have been many requests for new trails. The Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC) has worked hard to educate riders on safe snowmobiling practices. The 55 m.p.h. speed limit for snowmobiles at night has been a success. The number of fatalities last year was down, but the majority of fatalities were alcohol related. There have been discussions between AWSC, DNR and DOT about linking an OWI citation on a recreational vehicle (snowmobile) with the operator's driver license, but there has not been anything proposed for the upcoming season.
- *Cross-country skiing.* Last season was a very good season for cross-country skiing with more places poised to make snow this year. Skiing areas have been making investments in facilities and infrastructure and are ready for another busy year, with preseason snow predictions expected to be similar to last year. This year a racer from Wisconsin will be on the United States Ski Team.
- *Users with Disabilities.* Joque will see if Terry Larson wants to reschedule to talk at the January meeting. The National Trails Training Partnership, an alliance of Federal agencies, training providers, nationwide supporters and others, is looking at universal design as it relates to trails. Universal design is not just for the physically challenged, and more information and literature about the topic will be coming out from other recreation and trail uses. Joque passed out an excerpt from *Minnesota Trails Magazine*.
- *Equestrian.* The Wisconsin State Horse Council has worked with UW-River Falls on an economic impact study on horses in Wisconsin. The survey was used to estimate the number of horse households in Wisconsin and other economic impacts. Horses are used

mostly for pleasure trail riding. Issues identified range from land use concerns, housing developments and lack of local trails. The Horse Council is working on a brochure about the study. Carpenter handed out a copy of Chapter 2 of the *USFS Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads and Campgrounds*. The book is a good guidebook for all trails, not just equestrian trails, and details the benefits of trail system planning.

- *Bicycling*. Trek Bicycle Corporation donated more than \$8,000 to the Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA) for trail development. The donation is part of Trek's "One World, Two Wheels" initiative. The Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC) has released the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation to help communities lobby for more biking and pedestrian funding at the federal level. Madison already has a list of projects outlined in a case statement. RTC will be sending out a press release on October 20. Webber stated it is important for bicyclists and pedestrians to advocate for more federal funding so bike/ped money is not diverted to other sources.
- *Department of Transportation*. Transportation enhancements were awarded to 47 different projects in the state, with 29 for bike and pedestrian projects. The missing link for the Badger State Trail was one of six state trail projects awarded.

DNR Report

- Brown passed out a copy of the *Wisconsin State Park System Strategic Plan* (<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/reports/sp/wspstrategicplan08.pdf>) to council members. The Strategic Plan was presented to the NRB in the summer. The Plan focuses on resource management and quality recreation. Some of the goals include having sustainable trails and recreation, expanding the State Park System a little by acquisitions where possible, creating partnerships, controlling invasive species, providing more camping opportunities and increasing the number of electric campsites, as well as building and linking longer Ice Age Trail segments for multi-day hikes. The State Park System is also looking at different ways to provide interpretation at park properties through innovative technology. It is not possible to have a naturalist at each park, but it is important to educate and connect children with nature.
- The State Park System, like all state agencies, is facing a budget crunch. Some of the funding ideas the Non-Motorized Trails Legislative Study Committee is working on may benefit the State Park System.
- The DNR is researching different areas of the Motorized Recreation Area (MRA) concept including the development process, needed infrastructure, partnership options with local governments and user groups, possible DNR roles, engineering, maintenance and funding. The concept must go before the Natural Resources Board and the NRB will then advise the DNR on how the DNR can move forward on an MRA project.
- Upcoming master plans the DNR will be working on include the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest (including the recent Rainbow Springs acquisition), Point Beach State Forest, the state parks in Door County, Copper Falls State Park and the Ice Age complex at Cross Plains. The DNR will also be looking to create management plans for smaller State Ice Age Trail Areas.

- The Trail Crew has finished their time at Governor Dodge and has moved to Wyalusing State Park. The crew will be ending work for the season in November.
- Brown stated there is a need to update the DNR Trail Designs Standards, and will be contacting user groups.
- The October 16-19 T-zone gun deer hunt is taking place during a busy recreation time. There is a possibility that this is a conflict with other recreational uses on some state park properties. Forest staff will be handing out an October Gun Deer Hunting Questionnaire to hunters and other Kettle Moraine State Forest users. The questionnaire will provide some data for the Park System to make any appropriate recommendations to the hunting season structure.
- Jerry Leiterman, Superintendent for the Kettle Moraine State Forest – Northern Unit, welcomed the council to the Forest. KMSF-NU has over 150 miles of trail on nearly thirty-thousand acres of forest land. The Greenbush Shelter for the STC meeting is the result of a cooperative effort between the DNR and local ski club. The club was able to donate money and labor to help build the shelter. Leiterman passed out a copy of the *October Gun Deer Hunting Questionnaire* that DNR staff will be handing out to hunters and forest users.

Wisconsin Department of Tourism Presentation

- Will Christianson, Outreach Coordinator with the Wisconsin Department of Tourism gave a presentation that highlighted Tourism's marketing of Wisconsin's trails, the Tourism website and branding platform, including the Wisconsin Travel Green program, the first sustainable tourism program in the nation. Some fall and agriculture tourism options include the Fall Sampler publication, culinary tours and orchards as well as corn mazes and pumpkin patches. Christianson stated that it might be possible for someone from Tourism to update the STC on an annual basis.

Ad Hoc Committee Update

- McFadzen and Harden updated the Council about the Ad Hoc Committee. The most recent meeting was on October 16. This was the second meeting of the committee as they look at ways to improve the structure of the STC and be more inclusive. Some of the possible recommendations involved including non-voting members in STC meetings and specifically identifying major trail user groups. The committee was able to propose a number of potential recommendations and made very good progress in the last part of the meeting. Details of the proposals will be worked out. Phillips asked if the committee had proposed any recommendations relating to cultural diversity. McFadzen stated that is one of the charges the committee will be working on at the next meeting. The committee will be getting together again before the January STC meeting and should have more details for some of the proposed recommendations. Harden and McFadzen will update the STC in January and the committee will be presenting a final report to the STC in April.

2009 Officer Elections

- Nordbo presented a slate of officers for 2009: Randy Harden, chair, Ken Carpenter, vice-chair, and Robbie Webber, secretary. Thornton motioned to accept the nominations, seconded by Webber. Passed unanimously.

Meeting Dates for 2009

- Monday, January 12, 2009 10-12 p.m. (teleconference)
- Tuesday, April 28, 2009 10-3 p.m. (Madison, State Capitol Building)
- Friday, July 17, 2009, 10-2 p.m. (Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area)
- Friday, October 16, 2009, 10-2 p.m. (Governor Thompson State Park)

Other Business

- Council members were interested in discussing campgrounds and trail uses on a future agenda. Brown stated that it would be important to have DNR staff available to attend the July STC meeting to discuss some of the camping topics.
- Carpenter asked about inviting legislators, local officials and user groups to STC meetings to provide a venue for them to speak and interact with the council. The DNR invites all legislators to the spring STC meeting at the State Capitol Building. Specific invitations for other STC meetings are extended to area legislators and any other legislators at the request of STC members. The council may also invite other individuals to meetings to discuss relevant topics.
- Brown passed out a copy of current RTP criteria. There was some discussion at the last council meeting about revisiting the RTP criteria. The council may want to discuss at a future STC meeting.

Public Comment

- Kathleen Rammer, with the Wisconsin State Horse Council and “Neigh” bors for Trails explained that she was concerned about access to the trails in the Kohler Company Forest Preserve adjacent to Kohler-Andrae State Park. Rammer stated that there used to be access from the horse trails in Kohler-Andrae to the Preserve but this connection has been closed off. Rammer stated that her group was willing to help reconnect the trails. Brown stated it is not generally the DNR policy to extend trails into private land.
- Dave Peterson stated that Wolf River State Trail in Langlade County is in the final stages for completion. The trail will be open for snowmobiling this year. Funding is trying to be acquired for a more conducive surface for summer uses. McFadzen stated if the STC is to review RTP funding rules, one of the possible options could be to adjust the criteria to favor (more than currently) grants for smaller projects which might help with a project such as the Wolf River Trail.
- Pat Thornton stated that the support and attendance of legislators at meetings of the Governor's Council on Tourism has made a big difference in moving forward with issues and it would be a good idea for the STC to have more interaction with state legislators.
- Motion to adjourn by McFadzen. Seconded by Thornton. Meeting adjourned.